

## A STUDY OF ELDERLY LIVING IN OLD AGE HOMES AND FAMILY IN PUNE DISTRICT OF MAHARASHTRA

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### ABSTRACT

#### BACKGROUND

The older generation is caught between the decline in traditional values on one hand and the absence of adequate social security system on the other. The elderly citizens are in need of urgent attention. They don't need our pity, but the understanding, love and care of their fellow human beings. It is our duty to see that they don't spend the twilight years of their life in isolation, pain and misery.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was undertaken in elderly living in two old age homes and some families of general population living in Pune, in July-2017. The data was collected from a sample of hundred and twenty elderly people, after a random selection, sixty from old-age homes (OAHs) and sixty were from the families. These data were collected from two OAHs using a specially designed Interview schedule and observation technique through a house to house survey for those residing in the family. These informations thus obtained were collected, analysed, tabulated, and finally presented in the form of numbers and percentages.

#### RESULTS

Our present study shows that out of total 60 respondents taken from families, 33.3% belongs to 60-65 yrs. of age group, 47% from 65-70 yrs., 13.3% from 70-75 yrs., and 6.6% were from above 75 yrs. of age group. Out of other 60 respondents living in OAHs, these data were 3.3%, 16.6%, 47%, and 33.3% respectively. Majority of the respondents (43.3%) living in the families preferred a company with their family members. Majority of the elderly (53.3%) were more comfortable to make their social relationship with their inmates. Among those elderly living in OAHs, 86.6% were visiting religious places, and 3.3% were resorting to meditation.

#### CONCLUSION

It could be concluded from our present study that the general feelings of the elderly living in the families had better position than that of the elderly living in OAHs. Older persons are in need of vital support that will keep important aspects of their life-styles intact while improving their over-all quality of life.

#### KEYWORDS

Elderly People, Family, Old Age Homes.

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#### BACKGROUND

Old age means reduced physical ability, declining mental ability, the gradual giving up of role playing in socio-economic activities, and a shift in economic status moving from economic independence to economic dependence upon other's for support and care. Old age is called "dark" not because the light fails to shine, but because people refuse to see it.<sup>1</sup> People go to old age homes mainly because they have no relatives to care for them. Thus, the individuals who see alternative accommodation due to

isolation or loneliness, relocation of congregate-style accommodation may increase their social contact and have a positive impact on their well-being.<sup>2</sup>

Ageing is an inevitable developmental phenomenon bringing along a number of changes in the social, psychological, hormonal and physical conditions. These changes affect quality of life (QOL) of the elderly.<sup>3</sup> As life expectancy continues to rise, one of the greatest challenges of public health is to improve the quality of life in later years.<sup>4</sup> India like many other developing countries in the world is witnessing the rapid ageing of its population. The traditional sense of duty and obligation of the younger generation towards their older generation is being eroded because of changes in the economic structure, the erosion of societal values, weakening of social values and social institutions such as the joint family. Main reasons behind these changes are urbanization, modernization, and globalization which are rapidly changing economic and social milieu to such an extent that the younger generation

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is searching for new identities encompassing economic independence and redefined social roles within, as well as outside, the family. Nowadays, the role of families in case of older person has declined due to structural changes which have taken place in the Indian society and the concomitant disintegration of the joint family system, which results in the rejection or neglect of the aged. Actually, the older generation is caught between the decline in traditional values on one hand and the absence of adequate social security system on the other.<sup>5</sup> These factors finally resulted in breaking up of traditional family system. Life-satisfaction is very important in psycho-social study of aging. Research reports that life-satisfaction is strongly related to socio-demographic and psycho-social variables.<sup>6</sup>

The elderly citizens are in need of urgent attention. They don't need our pity, but the understanding, love and care of their fellow human beings. It is our duty to see that they don't spend the twilight years of their life in isolation, pain and misery.<sup>7</sup>

In India, there is low awareness about special needs of elderly and care takers are yet to understand the basics of elderly care (physical and mental health, psychological and social support). Furthermore, there is variation between those elderly people living in old age homes from those living in family. So, there was a need for a study specially to know the problems of geriatric age group persons. This study was conducted to compare the general feelings, personal likings, social relations of the elderly residing in old age homes and with families.

Main objectives of this study were-

1. To compare the environment of elderly persons residing in old age homes and within the family.
2. To study the background profile of elderly staying at old age homes and within the family.
3. To study the general feelings, social relationships, personal likings and attitude of elderly.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study was undertaken in elderly people living in old age homes (Village - Kamshet and Wanawadi of Pune district of Maharashtra) and from some families of general population residing in Pune, in the month of July-2017. The data was collected from a convenient sample of hundred and twenty elderly people, sixty from old-age homes (OAHs) and sixty from the families. The data was collected from two OAHs after a random selection, both of them were from urban area and these data were collected using a specially designed interview schedule and observation technique through a house to house survey for those residing in the family. Elderly people living in OAHs were approached after taking permission from in-charges of the OAHs and verbal consent from subjects regarding study.

Most of the individuals included in our present study were sixty years of age or above and non-working. Those elderly living in families provided information about their age, while the age of those living in OAHs were taken from

OAHs records. The interview schedule was divided into four sections- The first section included questions regarding general information of the respondents. The second section included questions regarding social relations of elderly with their friends, relatives and family members. The third section included questions pertaining to general feelings of old people to loneliness, social insecurity, happiness, depression, etc., and the fourth section included questions regarding the personal interests and hobbies of elderly.

All these information thus obtained were analysed according to the objectives of this study, coded and tabulated. The results have been presented in the form of numbers and percentages.

**RESULTS**

Variables	Living in the family (No.)	Living in the family (%)	Living in the OAHs (No.)	Living in the OAHs (%)
<b>Age</b>				
60-65 yrs.	20	33.3	02	3.3
65-70 yrs.	28	47.0	10	16.6
70-75 yrs.	08	13.3	28	47
Above 75 yrs.	04	6.6	20	33.3
<b>Education</b>				
Illiterate	22	36.6	56	93.3
Primary	18	30	02	3.3
Middle	10	16.6	-	-
Matric	06	10	02	3.3
Higher Secondary	02	3.3	-	-
Graduation	02	3.3	-	-
<b>Type of Family</b>				
Joint family	22	36.6	20	33.3
Extended family	38	63.3	40	66.6
<b>Number of Family Members</b>				
2-5	14	23.3	36	60
6-9	28	46.6	24	40
10-13	08	13.3	-	-
Above 13	10	16.6	-	-
<b>Table 1. General Information of the Respondents</b>				

Table 1 reveals that out of total 60 respondents taken from families, 33.3% belongs to 60-65 yrs. of age group, 47% from 65-70 yrs., 13.3% from 70-75 yrs., and 6.6% were from above 75 yrs. of age group. Out of other 60 respondents living in OAHs, these data were 3.3% for 60-65 yrs., 16.6% for 65-70 yrs., 47% for 70-75 yrs., and 33.3% for above 75 yrs. age groups. Extended form of family was the more popular form in both the set-ups. In our present study the family size of the respondents varied from 2 to more than 13 family members in the family set-up, whereas for most of the aged in OAHs, the family size varied from 2-9 members.

Relationship Preferred	Living in the family	Living in the family	Living in the OAHs	Living in the OAHs
	No.	%	No.	%
Neighbours	06	10	-	-
Family members	26	43.3	10	16.6
Relatives	20	33.3	-	-
Others (friends, visitors, etc)	-	-	10	16.6
Inmates	-	-	32	53.3
Wants to live alone	08	13.3	08	13.3

**Table 2. Social Relationship of the Respondents**

Table 2 compares social relationship of elderly living in the families and OAHs. Majority of the respondents (43.3%) living in the families preferred a company with their family members. After that about 33.3% of them preferred their relatives. Majority of the elderly (53.3%) were more comfortable to make their social relationship with their inmates.

Different Activities	Living in the family	Living in the family	Living in the OAHs	Living in the OAHs
	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Recreational Activities</b>				
Watching Television	20	33.3	18	30
Reading magazines, books, etc	26	43.3	04	6.6
Listening to music, religious songs, etc	14	23.3	20	33.3
<b>Leisure-time Activities</b>				
Meditation & Prayers	06	10	02	3.3
Talking to someone	32	53	38	63.3
Summarising personal memories	08	13.3	20	33.3
<b>Outdoor Activities</b>				
Shopping	14	23.3	08	13.3
Visiting the religious places nearby	40	66.0	52	86.6

**Table 3. Personal Interests of the Respondents**

Table 3 gives a picture of personal interests of respondents living in their families and OAHs. It was observed in our study that 43.3% of elderly persons living in the families had more interest towards reading magazines, religious books, and newspapers for passing their time, while 33.3% of them were having their interest towards watching television, and the other 23.3% preferred to listen music for the peace of their mind. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the elderly living in OAHs stated that listening to music helped in their mental relaxation and forgetting their tension and stresses. Among those elderly living in OAHs, 86.6% were visiting religious

places (temple, mosque, etc.), and 3.3% were resorting to meditation to keep themselves relaxed, refreshed and tension free.

**DISCUSSION**

In our present study out of total 60 respondents taken from families, 33.3% belongs to 60-65 yrs. of age group, 47% from 65-70 yrs., 13.3% from 70-75 yrs., and 6.6% were from above 75 yrs. of age group. Out of other 60 respondents living in OAHs, these data were 3.3% for 60-65 yrs., 16.6% for 65-70 yrs., 47% for 70-75 yrs., and 33.3% for above 75 yrs. age groups. Extended form of family was the more popular form in both the set-ups. In our present study the family size of the respondents varied from 2 to more than 13 family members in the family set-up, whereas for most of the aged in OAHs, the family size varied from 2-9 members Table 1.

Table 2 compares social relationship of elderly living in the families and OAHs. Majority of the respondents (43.3%) living in the families preferred a company with their family members. After that about 33.3% of them preferred their relatives. Family members, relatives and friends are expected to take care of their elderly parents. However, due to industrialization, urbanization, and migration, there is a negative impact on care for elderly people. Many of the elderly feel that the attitude of younger generation towards them has undergone a tremendous change and become less satisfactory. Montross et al,<sup>8</sup> also pointed towards a positive relationship between friends and successful ageing. It suggests that larger the number of close relatives and friends and the more frequent is the contact with friends, the higher is the score of successful ageing indicators among elders.

In our present study, it was observed in our study that 43.3% of elderly persons living in the families had more interest towards reading magazines, religious books, and newspapers for passing their time, while 33.3% of them were having their interest towards watching television, and the other 23.3% preferred to listen music for the peace of their mind. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the elderly living in OAHs stated that listening music helped in their mental relaxation and forgetting their tension and stresses. These findings were consistent with the study of HuoliqinY.<sup>9</sup> which shows that these leisure activities influence life-satisfaction, health and physical illness. Among those elderly living in OAHs, 86.6% were visiting religious places (temple, mosque, etc.), and 3.3% were resorting to meditation to keep themselves relaxed, refreshed and tension free. There is a common belief that in old age people tend to become more and more inclined towards religion, because religion provides a sort of social support in the form of personal contact with other people at religious gatherings with whom they could share their thoughts.

**CONCLUSION**

The disintegration of the joint family system and the impact of economic change have brought into sharp focus the peculiar problems which the old people now face in our

country. Also, the duty and obligations of the younger generation is being eroded. Ultimately, it could be concluded that the general feelings of the elderly living in the families had better position than that of the elderly living in OAHs. Older persons are in need of vital support that will keep important aspects of their life-styles intact while improving their over-all quality of life. In this context, the need for preserving our tradition of a joint family and the mutual co-operation and understanding between the younger and the older generations could be more processing.

**Recommendations-**There is a need for concerted efforts of the government, non-governmental organizations, religious institutions and individuals not only to understand but also to solve or at least mitigate the whole gamut of problems resulting from a graying society, so that the aged people can lead a dignified and meaningful life. New old age homes should be established with all required facilities. It is important that the state, civil society and community recognizes the rights and needs of the elderly persons and make suitable policies, legislations and effective implementations of health and security schemes which already exist. There is a need to protect human rights of the elderly and have to ensure adequate economic and social protection during disability and old age, especially where aged lack adequate family support.<sup>10</sup>

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